

## **Basic Pain Pathways and Their Modulation - A Refresher**

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The experience of pain is a vital function of the somatosensory pathway of the nervous system to warn the body of potential or actual injury. It is both a sensory and emotional experience, affected by psychological and social influences.

The ascending pain pathway starts from peripheral nociception, modulation within the dorsal horn, transmission along the spinal cord to pain perception in the brain. Descending inhibition from higher centres also exists to interrupt pain transmission. When nociception persists, neuroplastic changes will develop, leading to a condition known as central sensitization – one of the key mechanisms underlying chronic pain. The role of neuron-glia and neuron-immune cell interactions has also been shown to contribute to chronic pain.